- State Agriculture Ministers Conference held on 21.8.2009 to review the position and facilitate drawing up and implementing appropriate Agriculture & Constructive Action Plan.
- A meeting of Relief Commissioners of drought affected States held on 27th August 2009 to review measures being taken to reduce the impact of drought.
- Rabi 2009 Conference held on 24-25 September, 2009.
- Video Conference held on 5th & 6th October, 2009 with the drought declared States including some other States *viz.* Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana & Gujarat to review the issues relating to drought management, preparedness for Rabi season and status of implementation and expenditure under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Scheme for 25 kg. rice at Rs. 3 per kg.

199. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is proposing to issue 25 kg. of rice in a month at Rs. 3 per kg.;

(b) if so, when it will be issued;

(c) the financial commitment to Government by this scheme every year; and

(d) the political implication of this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. Foodgrains are allocated to States/Union Territories under Targeted Public Distribution System for their distribution to ration cardholders at subsidized prices. Government proposes to enact National Food Security Act as announced by the Honourable President of India in her address to the Joint Session of Parliament on 4th June, 2009.

(b) to (d) At present, Government is examining various aspects of the proposed law.

Implementation of PDS

200. DR. K.MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Distribution Scheme would be a success when it is not well organised in many States and is subject to a lot of misuse;

(b) the foolproof system contemplated to ensure effective and successful implementation of the scheme; and

(c) the measures to avert political interference in terms of selection of beneficiaries and to ensure right quantity and quality at right time to the beneficiaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs. The operational responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within the States/UTs, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them and supervision over and monitoring of functioning of over 5 lakh fair price shops, rest with the concerned State/UT Governments.

Barring certain instances of malpractices, TPDS has been ensuring distribution of subsidized foodgrains to identified BPL as well as APL families in the country.

To improve functioning of TPDS and to ensure that entitled quantities of foodgrains of proper quality get distributed to the eligible families, Government has directed State & UT Governments to take up the following measures -

A. to strengthen monitoring and vigilance by -

i) implementation of the Nine Point Action Plan;

ii) taking action against those with Bogus Ration Cards; and

iii) ensuring greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) Urban Local Bodies in functioning of Fair Price Shops.

B. to ensure increased transparency in functioning of TPDS by-

i) adoption and implementation of revised Model Citizens' Charter;

ii) introduction of monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains at Fair Price Shops and their distribution to ration card holders:

iii) taking up publicity-cum-awareness Campaign on TPDS; and

iv) display of allocation of foodgrains - district and FPS wise on websites for public scrutiny.

C. to use ICT tools such as:

i) computerisation of TPDS Operations;

ii) pilot scheme on Smart Card based Operations in Haryana and Chandigarh;

iii) piloting of new technologies for tracking movement of vehicles transporting TPDS Commodities.

D. to improve efficiency of FPS operations through-

i) doorstep delivery of foodgrains;

ii) ensuring timely availability of foodgrains;

iii) distribution of wheat flour/fortified wheat flour under TPDS;

iv) allotment of Fair Price Shops to Institutions and Groups;

v) sale of non-PDS items by FPS licensees, and

vi) revision of commission to FPS licensees.

The Government has been following up with the State/UT Governments for implementation of these measures.

Shortage of rice and wheat

201. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government intends to ban export of rice in the prevailing drought and flood situation to meet the country's food requirement;

(b) the expected deficit of rice and wheat production because of prevailing drought and flood situation; and

(c) how Government plans to meet the shortage of rice and wheat to ensure food security to the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. In view of the lower estimate of production of rice in kharif crop in 2009-10, it has been decided by the Government to continue the ban on export of non-basmati rice till further orders.

(b) As per first Advance Estimates of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, production of kharif rice of 2009-10 is estimated at 69.45 million tonnes, against the estimated production of 84.58 million tonnes in kharif rice of 2008-09 (fourth Advance Estimates). Estimate of production of wheat crop of 2009-10 to be marketed in Rabi Marketing Season 2010-11 has not yet been made.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of rice and wheat to ensure food security of the country are given in the Statement.

Statement

Steps taken by the Government to maximize procurement of Wheat and Rice:

Wheat

(i) Wheat export on private account has been banned from 9.2.2007 till further orders.

(ii) Import of wheat on private account at zero duty has been permitted till further orders.

(iii) The Central issue prices of wheat have not been increased since 1.7.2002 in order to lessen the burden of inflation on the poor.

(iv) The MSP for wheat was fixed at Rs.1000 per quintal for RMS 2008-09. As a result of this and other measures taken by Government, 226.89 lakh tonnes of wheat was purchased in RMS 2008-09, which has enhanced the availability of wheat. The MSP for wheat in RMS 2009-10 was fixed at Rs.1080 per quintal, which has contributed to procurement of 252.92 lakh tonnes of wheat.

Rice

(i) In KMS 2008-09, the MSP of Rs.850/- and Rs.880/- per quintal was fixed for Common and Grade 'A' varieties of paddy. The Government also allowed a bonus of Rs.50/- per quintal on both varieties of paddy during KMS 2008-09 to maximize the procurement. As a result of this, a record quantity of 336.04 lakh tonnes of rice was procured in KMS 2008-09, which has enhanced the availability of rice in the Central Pool. In KMS 2009-10, the MSP of Rs.950/- and Rs.980/- per quintal was fixed for Common and Grade 'A' varieties of paddy. The Government has also allowed a bonus of Rs.50/- per quintal on both varieties of paddy during KMS 2009-10 to maximize rice procurement for Central pool.

(ii) Export of non-basmati rice has been banned *w.e.f.* 1.4.2008. Export of Basmati Rice is allowed only at Minimum Export Price(MEP) of US$ 900 per MT.

(iii) Import of rice at zero duty has been permitted.

(iv) The Central Issue Prices of Rice have not been revised since 1.7.2002.

(v) To have an assessment of major rice purchases by private trade, a notification titled "Rice (Stock Declaration by Companies or Firms or individuals) Order 2009 has been issued under the Essential Commodities Act 1955 on 11.11.2009. The order provides that any Company or Firms or individual which purchases paddy (in terms of rice) or rice beyond 10,000 tonnes during Kharif Marketing Season 2009-10 (October-September) shall furnish a return to the Secretary, Department of Food of the State from where maximum quantity has been purchased. In case the purchase of paddy (in terms of rice) exceeds 25, 000 tonnes (throughout the country) the return in the prescribed proforma has to be submitted to Department of Food and Public Distribution of Central Government.

(vi) State Governments were requested to maximize the procurement of rice by opening sufficient number of procurement centres and by other necessary arrangements for the procurement of paddy and its milling. State Governments were also requested to enforce a minimum levy of 50%. Commission to societies and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for KMS 2009-10 has been fixed at 2.5% of MSP to maximize procurement from small and marginal farmers.

Price rise of essential commodities

202. SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of essential commodities like pulses, sugar and vegetables have skyrocketed during the past few months in the country;

(b) if so, the details of prices of each of these essential commodities during the last six months as compared to corresponding period of previous year;

(c) whether Government has failed, to gear up the public distribution system to mitigate the impact of deficient rains in the country;

(d) if so, the details and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the remedial measures taken by Government to check the prices of essential commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) There has been increase in All India average wholesale prices of pulses such as Tur, Sugar, Vegetables such as Onion, Potato during the past few months in the country.

(b) The details of the All India average wholesale prices of pulses such as Tur, Sugar, Vegetables such as Onion, Potato during the last six months as compared to corresponding period of previous year is given in the enclosed Statement-I *(See* below).

(c) No Sir. The price control measures through allocations of foodgrains under TPDS to States/UTs and strengthening of the TPDS is given in the enclosed Statement-II *(See* below).

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The Government Measures to check the prices of essential commodities are given in the enclosed Statement-III [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to USQ 176 Part (c)]

Statement-I

All India Average Wholesale Prices of Pulses, Sugar, Onion and Potato during the last six months as compared to previous year

Gram (Rs./Quintal)

Month	2008	2009
June	3141.94	3014.4
July	3163.95	3096.83
August	3292.23	3197.1
September	3297.58	3190.33
October	3246.47	3159.17
November	3192.69	3206.61

Sugar (Rs./Quintal)

Month	2008	2009
June	1608.67	2338.38
July	1630.32	2403.43
August	1807.91	2598,87
September	1916.28	2806.92
October	1892.01	2879.3
November	1872.28	2967.3
		Onion (Rs./Quintal)
June	574.19	947.45
July	659.66	970.36
August	867.31	950.21
September	906.59	961.89
October	889.6	1314.38
November	985.45	1489.95
		Tur (Rs./Quintal)
June	3723.94	5007.5
July	3906.04	5733.9
August	4095.74	6472.7
September	4181.95	6615.6
October	4246.77	6705.2
November	4272.7	6973.9
		Potato (Rs./Quintal)
June	606.66	894.85
July	626.31	1036.5
August	672.36	1158.9
September	701.95	1288.9
October	701.79	1451.4
November	700.91	1551.1

Source:- State Civil Supplies Department